

Making a referral to ADS-BESB for vision services

A guide for 0-3 and other providers

Who is eligible for services from ADS-BESB Children's Services?

Children aged 0-21 who are Visually Impaired or Legally Blind.

Legal blindness (LB) vs. visual impairment (VI)

All measurements are in the better eye with the best correction.

LB = 20/200 or worse or visual field less than 20 degrees

VI = 20/70 – 20/200

Children who have a documented visual functioning of 20/70 may be considered for BESB services. If the doctor is unable to determine a visual acuity due to age, or another reason, and has documented an observed visual functioning of 20/70 or worse, the child may be considered for BESB services. This applies to both ocular and brain-based visual impairments.

How to refer to BESB: Use the form on our website and FAX to (860) 706-5809

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/AgingandDisability/FORMS/besb_eye_report_form.docx

An ophthalmologist, optometrist, family doctor, pediatrician, neurologist, APRN, or other appropriate medical professional needs to write this explanation (commonly called an eye report), but it can be sent to us by the family or by 0-3 or another provider as well.

Please use the form referenced, but additional information is encouraged.

Eye doctors are required by law to refer people in CT who are legally blind to BESB, BUT not those who are visually impaired, so you may need to ask for a referral if a child's visual impairment is questionable or not very severe. Keep in mind that many minor visual impairments may not be severe enough to qualify for services from BESB. Providing the doctor with the Eye Doctor Reporting Form will help them make a complete report so that BESB has the necessary information as soon as possible. There is a space for the doctor to explain if a child is too young to test, doesn't respond to traditional testing, or if they are making their best guess.

When BESB receives a referral eye report, it is "coded" LB, VI or NVI (not visually impaired).

- If LB or VI, an intake form is sent to the parent to complete and sign. This is the formal application for services. Services are not mandatory and can be refused/requested at any time, but they cannot begin until the signed intake form is returned to BESB.
- If NVI, the family is notified, and can seek another medical opinion if they wish to pursue eligibility. Families can also request a one-time consultation from a teacher of students with visual impairments.
- If there is not enough information to make an eligibility determination, the referral is sent back to the doctor with a request for more information.

Questions: contact Catherine.Summ@ct.gov